

Lesson 4: Ko'ai tò'ou ingoa? – What is your name?

07/11/2012 Wednesday



❖ Tangi: Kia orāna

- ❖ Today we are going to launch into our third Cook Island Māori language lesson for Term 4 and learn how to ask someone their name. But before we begin, we are first going to recap on how to goodbye to say goodbye someone who is staying, to someone who is leaving and finally, to say goodbye and good luck!

- When saying goodbye to someone who is leaving, Cook Island Māori say

✚ 'Aere rà – Goodbye to someone who is going

✚ Say after me –

✚ 'Aere rà

- When saying goodbye to someone who is staying, Cook Island Māori say

✚ 'È no'o rà – Goodbye to someone who is staying

✚ Say after me –

✚ 'È no'o rà

- When saying goodbye and good luck, Cook Island Māori say

✚ 'Aere rà, kia manuia koe – Goodbye and good luck

✚ Say after me –

✚ 'Aere rà,

✚ kia manuia koe

✚ Altogether now –

✚ 'Aere rà, kia manuia koe

❖ Rina: Akaoki'anga kaka: Returning the glory

<http://www.cinews.co.ck/2012/April/Wed11/features.htm>

On Sunday 7th April this year, woven kikau baskets – packed tightly with fish baked in banana leaves and packaged chicken, cooked taro and tinned meat – lined the frond-covered floor of a meeting house last Sunday.



Mitiaro mamas in white dresses and rito hats sat on benches and held dressed-up babies as the men – their husbands, sons, grandsons, nephews – set to work sorting food into like piles and then re-distributing it evenly amongst the emptied baskets.

Men from all four of Mitiaro's villages formed assembly lines and passed corned beef, puraka and coconuts from their respective piles into baskets waiting to be filled.



❖ Leigh leigh:

It was the biggest food exchange of the year, staged in recognition of the cyclone season's end. It was also a microcosm of the way Nukuroa's society works – according to principles of

- ✚ Equality
- ✚ Generosity
- ✚ mutual respect and
- ✚ great faith

After Sunday communion the island converges on one meeting house – each year the venue alternates – to unload their baskets of chicken, fish, cabin bread, taro, puraka, coconut, rice, corned beef and bread.



When the food has been delivered via ute to the meeting house, it's re-distributed evenly – first to the **orometua** and his wife, next to the island's three **ui ariki** and then to everyone else.

The kai isn't shared at the meeting house – instead, people take their baskets home to share amongst their families and neighbours.



The feast follows three months of preparation, during which people plant “special foods” like **puraka**¹. Compiling the baskets – squeezing 50 coconuts’ worth of cream, baking kilos of taro in the umu, hooking tuna – is a labour-intensive and time-consuming enterprise.



Over a quarter of Nukuroa’s population works for the government on a rotational basis, but the week before the akaokianga kaka a decent number of employed people take time off in order to channel all their energy into preparing food. Some even take leave without pay.

¹ A course dry taro called puraka or swamp taro is enjoyed by locals but considered bland and starchy by foreigners.

❖ Whāea Jacque

The feast marks the lifting of a tapu imposed from November to March, or for the duration of the cyclone season.

For three months the people of **Mitiaro** refrain from dancing, singing loudly, playing sport, building, even participating in church-based activities like Sunday school and **vainetini** meetings. In that period fishermen don't venture very far outside the reef out of respect for the tapu and the unpredictability of seas in the throes of cyclone season.

But at the **akaokianga kaka** – or, after Easter weekend – the tapu is lifted until the next cyclone season rolls around. People don't resent the tapu on parties and activity – quite the contrary. **Aunty Nane' Pokoati Hodson** was quoted in the Cook Islands Online News in April this year as saying "We show respect and the Lord looks at us and knows that. He created the wind and the rain – He's the creator and they're His servants. We show respect so He takes them to the ocean and doesn't bring them to our island."

❖ Tangi

President of the House of Ariki, **Travel Tou Ariki**, is one of **Nukuroa's** three chiefs. He believes that the tradition of imposing a tapu during the cyclone season has – literally – sheltered the island from the storm and was quoted saying "In the old days all people respected (the tapu). They didn't do much work; all they did was pray to the Lord. And when the season finished in April they gave the blessing back to the Lord. We still do that," he said.

"During this time there's not much to do – no big events, no infrastructure work on the island. Everything stops because of respect. To me it works for the island, it really works. The island has been blessed. The young generation are trying to introduce new things but I still believe what the old people believed in. Cyclones sometimes just go past the island. When the report comes they reckon it will strike **Mitiaro** or **Nga-Pu-Toru** but there's nothing. I believe that what our ancestors believed still works for the island."

There are rules governing the sharing and distribution of food at the Sunday function. For example, households with four **ui rangatira** are obligated to bring four baskets. Widows, too, bring a basket. They just ask nephews or grandsons to collect their food.



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The **orometua** and the **ui ariki** don't bring baskets but they go home with brimming baskets. So great is the island's respect for its Cook Islands Christian Church minister and its chiefs that people not only offer the first of the baskets to them, but also voluntarily deliver it to their homes.

❖ Sharleen:

❖ Now let's practise how to ask someone their name and for the respondent, to reply correctly in Cook Island Māori. You'll notice that it sounds familiar to you and is almost the same as the Māori equivalent.

🏳️ Ko'ai tò'ou ingoa? – What is your name?

🏳️ Say after me

🏳️ Ko'ai

🏳️ tò'ou

🏳️ ingoa?

🏳️ All together now

🏳️ Ko'ai tò'ou ingoa?

❖ Now let's respond

🏳️ Ko (name)____ tòku ingoa – My name is____

🏳️ Say after me

🏳️ Ko (name)____ tòku ingoa

² Making the kika baskets for the Akaoki'anga kaka: Returning the glory ceremony